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Letter dated 1 May 2008 addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations

Further to my letter of 23 April 2008, I have the honour to inform you that the Spanish fishing vessel *Playa de Bakio*, seized illegally on the high seas on 20 April 2008 off Somali waters, was released on 27 April 2008, together with its 26 crew members, all of whom were unharmed.

After release, the vessel and its crew were escorted by a Spanish naval vessel to Victoria, the capital of the Republic of the Seychelles, from where the crew were repatriated to Spanish territory in a military aircraft.

Although pleased that the seizure was ended successfully, the Government of Spain wishes to reiterate its concern about the impact of the unsafe situation in the waters off Somalia, both on the delivery of the humanitarian aid which this region so needs, and on international shipping, and strongly condemns this and other acts of piracy, which are becoming ever more frequent in the waters off Somalia.

For these reasons, the Government of Spain is actively supporting the initiatives, currently under discussion in the Security Council, to strengthen cooperation among States and the relevant international organizations to combat piracy and armed robbery, with the goodwill and cooperation of the Somali authorities.

Now and in the immediate future, guaranteeing the delivery of humanitarian aid and the security of main shipping routes in the region at all times through appropriate international measures must be a central objective. Any maritime security initiative should be accompanied by a combined and coordinated international technical assistance effort for Somalia and the neighbouring coastal or regional States. The international community should also cooperate closely with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia to successfully rise to the task of bringing lasting peace and stability to the country. Unless that is achieved, it will be impossible to keep the region free of the maritime piracy and armed robbery currently afflicting it. Concerted action within the United Nations will be vitally important to coping with that challenge.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Juan Antonio **Yáñez-Barnuevo**

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